quire, as it were, a wisdom with respect to form, colour, and all other external attributes of nature, and, imitatively, of art. Whether any may justly argue that that quality, which we call taste, originally existed as such in the human mind, is, therefore, more than doubtful; but there was doubtless innate in it an admiration of the works of nature, a sense of connection with created things,—man being, in fact, himself but a link in God's chain of creation; and it is but according to experience to suppose, there resulted a preference for this or that form, just as the mind was more or less charmed by the images transmitted to it through the senses.

Thus even with respect to the works around us, you would find in men of different climates, or accustomed to different scenery, a diversity of taste: he whose native land is a very garden adorned with an endless variety of foliage, rife with flowers, intersected by rivers, and also thronged with graceful animals, and birds of all brilliant hues and modifications of song—such a man, I say, would probably possess a taste for that which is florid, rich, vivid in idea; his feeling would be rather for the beautiful, than for the grand; he would prefer that which charms to that which astonishes;—the fault, perhaps, of his taste, would be an inclination towards redundancy; the advantage of it, a sparkling gorgeous fancy; a bright imagination; a magnificent versatility of thought; and, perhaps, a capacity for detail. On the other hand, a man accustomed to the waste sublimity of the desert, would possess a corresponding taste for extent, even for boundlessness; an inhabitant of a mountainous region would admire what is lofty, aspiring, towering, free; the capacity of the two last would probably be for generalising; and with respect to what is free, we are well aware that both Arabs and Swiss are noted for their devotion to liberty. A maritime nation would prefer the bold, strong, extensive. Such would be the taste of each of these with respect to nature; but it is curious to observe, how, when man came by degrees to express his mind in buildings, he appears, in certain respects concerning art, to have sought that which he had not in nature around him; as though in some lands he had said—I have no mountains—I will build them; I will raise something that shall overawe its own creator—something vast, by which I myself shall be astounded—and so, further, according to the excess of the designing mind above its fellows, was the amount of awe and wonder inspired among them. But this subject will further develope itself as we advance, and, having premised thus much concerning taste in general, I will proceed to consider it more particularly with respect to individual nations. Of the earliest building of the world, such as the ark, probably by no means elegant, or the tower of Babel, we should think a huge, unsightly mass, possessing no element of the sublime, but that of size, it is not necessary to dilate. Whether the latter was really built, as we have seen it drawn, like a huge snake rising on its coils, curling up to heaven, and most industriously lifting the nations to the stars, is of little moment; but it was probably built of a kind of brick, cemented with the bitumen that abounded in the Babylonian territory; and as the object was to build to heaven, it would no doubt be raised in a great hurry, and with little regard to design. It is not *here*, then, we shall look for taste. In passing, we might observe, that the scriptural story is strongly resembled by the heathen fable of the giants piling Ossa on the top of Pelion to dethrone Jove. But as we shall have occasion to return to Babylon, let us pass into Egypt, historically more ancient. Here we find the sublimity of magnitude extraordinarily developed; a massiveness that is suggestive of eternity, and an imitation of nature in many respects unbounded. Here are the mountainous pyramids; here is the Sphinx, whose head only now rises above the surrounding deserts, once thronged by its superstitious worshippers. Here are the palaces, where their kings dwelt; the temples where their priests deceived; the tombs which have given up their dead for the daily inspection of the curious in modern museums, where death itself has become the subject of impertinence.

The sphinx was originally a huge block of stone that stood before the pyramids, and it shows the *grand* taste of the Egyptians to have converted it into the wonderful figure which still remains. The taste of the Egyptians was evidently for a solid, gloomy grandeur; they delighted in massive pillars, in dusky chambers, in broad effects of light and shade, in dark labyrinthine walks, in cavernous edifices guarded by gigantic recumbent figures, or the huge forms of deities, gaunt, awful, oppressive. Their observance of nature was great: it is asserted by some that they derived the fluted column from the simple idea of reeds bound together at the top—and their sacred language is an endless succession of the forms of birds, beasts, fishes, and reptiles—in fact, we may say, they *wrote* in beasts and reptiles: many of their vessels and ornaments are evidently imitated from nature, with great quaintness and versatility of design; but in all they seem to have practised an almost disproportionate solidity of construction. Theirs was eminently an architecture of symbolism: their principal buildings being for sacred purposes, they seemed determined to have written the story of their creed in every pillar, every stone; and by that means to give their designs, as it were, an actual, positive sense—to make them a species of embodied poetry—so that every man on seeing the temple, would at once be able to read in its form, proportion, number, and colour, the scripture of the god to whom it was dedicated and belonged. In their flat country, we perceive that they made their edifices mountainous; that that regard of death with which their religion inspired them, extended a sobering influence to their works; and certainly some of their vast temples could have derived no extra cheerfulness from the fact that they were only magazines of mummied crocodiles and cats; and, finally, to repeat, we perceive that their architectural taste was for a gloomy sublimity of symbolism, and that if we were to seek a symbol to express it, we might call it a sarcophagus. With respect to literature, at which I shall occasionally take the liberty to glance, we have, so far as concerns the Egyptians, small idea of their taste: their painting, such as it was, and their sculpture, wonderful as is the latter in respect of manual skill, appear to have existed only as subordinate aids to the architect, and are simply entitled to share in the above general remarks.

A most ancient, curious, and at one time mighty people, were the Chaldees: a tribe of people formed, probably, from the conflux of many others in those well watered plains, who inhabited the districts of Babylon and Nineveh, and who boasted a dynasty descended from Nimrod, according to some, the same with Ninus and Belus,—the god of the tower of Babel. It is probable they had some connection with the Egyptians. The monuments of Nineveh, recently discovered, wear certainly in many respects an Egyptian appearance. If you examine them, you will observe a similar mystical taste,—a profound disregard of perspective, and a great aptitude for expressing things by signs: thus, a castle sometimes bears a marvellous resemblance to its namesake of chess; a distant river is represented by very lively fish in single file; while, to illustrate the country beyond, you will probably find several indigenous trees appearing to grow out of the fishes' backs. The carvers of the Nineveh marbles seem, nevertheless, to have had a feeling after truth. In the treatment of animals, they may be said comparatively to excel: the lions in the lion hunts are full of vivacity and expression, although sometimes rather symbolical (I mean in size) in the teeth and claws. To prove what I say concerning the truth of these lions, you will find depicted on the tips of some of their tails a claw, whose existence had of late years been disputed, but it is now again established. The procession of captives and beasts on the obelisk is in several respects, and considering its probable antiquity, admirably executed.

To turn to history, we are told almost incredible wonders of Babylon. The walls were 300 feet high, 80 feet thick, built of brick and bitumen; flanked and protected with numerous towers, adorned with a hundred brass gates, and sixty miles in circumference. We are told the Euphrates was enclosed by piers in a straight canal through the city; that there was a bridge of huge stones fastened together with lead, and bound with iron chains: to the west stood the tower of Belus, or Babel, enriched with an infinity of spoils and golden images; in the New Palace, Nebuchadnezzar, it is said, had raised a hanging garden, on sub-arched terraces, to the walls, to gratify a Median wife, who, having come from a wooded and mountainous country to one which consisted of a vast, flat plain, intersected with streams, and interminable rows of willows, missed, in accordance with what we have observed of natural taste, the beauties of her native land, and desired them reproduced. Now, if all this account were true, it would show that the Babylonians had not only a taste for the sublime, but also for the beautiful; and, besides, had attained a pitch of excellence in the execution of art. Babylon having vanished from the earth under an irresistible doom, we have not even a trace of it left whereby to judge; but it is said to have been about the size of Nineveh, and Nineveh has been proved, by the discoveries of Mr. Layard, to have been sixty miles in circumference,—the exact girth, under the expression of a three days' journey, assigned to it in the book of Jonah. We will then suppose a considerable, at least some portion, of the Babylonian account to be true; and will thence observe, that their taste was kindred to the Egyptian; they might even improve themselves by maritime influences at second hand, having conquered the great and industrious city of Tyre, and carried off all its works of art; and they might, too, have turned to good purpose the genius of the captive Jews, educated by Tyre. Their buildings appear to have been raised on huge platforms, in graduated masses, the Pyramidal appearing to be the prevailing form of general outline. The bulk of their walls certainly seems proved by modern discovery; and we have also good reason to believe they had considerable power to work in metals. Altogether their taste was for the great and astonishing, for vastness of design, and solidity of execution.

Persepolis is suggested by the consideration of Babylon. Certain discoveries have been made concerning it, and it appears, in accordance with the ruin, to have been built on great platforms, with elevations of huge pillars, still on the graduated principle. It is also probable that the chambers of the palaces were similar to those already discovered at Nimroud, thickly walled and surrounded with bas-reliefs. Generally of Egypt and Assyria it may be observed, that their taste, although not unguided by a knowledge of proportion and arrangement, was for the expression of power, for great cost, and works the result of almost superhuman labour. They cultivated geometry, astronomy, music—though the proportion of harmonic sounds was not discovered till long after by Pythagoras,—astrology, alchymy, and magic,—but everything was rendered subservient to priestcraft. They had also an idea of colour; but as they attained in it only to brilliancy, its effect was certainly more gaudy than harmonious, and must have caused a strange contrast with the grandeur of their other works.

We have little record of Persian architecture; but there is a singular account of the ancient capital city of Ecbatana. It is said that Dejoces, the king, built it on a hill, with seven walls, but they were so disposed, rising one within another to the summit of the hill, that the ramparts of each wall should show above the one in front. These elevated portions were each painted of a different colour, so that the appearance in the distance would have been, as it were, of a horizontal rainbow. In this we observe principally a taste for effect and display. This taste was very strikingly developed in the Persians: their idea of magnificence and pomp displays itself in many particulars of their history. Their literature, like that of the other nations, was chiefly mystical and symbolical. In religion they were fire-worshippers, performing their rites in the open air, until Zoroaster ordered the fire altars to be enclosed in temples, of which there were three kinds,—the first mere oratories, where the sacred fire was kept in lamps; the second public fanes, where the fire was kept, like that of the vestal virgins at Rome, continually burning on altars; the third, the grand abode of the arch priest,

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